



## The Heathkit Legacy .....8

By Rich Post KB8TAD

This month's cover story is a look at the long history of the most successful high-end amateur radio kit company that spanned the greater part of the 20th Century. Longtime Heathkit collector and regular contributor to *Monitoring Times*, Rich Post KB8TAD, has been building and collecting Heathkit products since he was a teenager in the late 1950s.

Begun originally in the early 1920s as a kit-plane business, the Heath Company has enjoyed a varied life infused with a sense of quality that made Heathkit radio products extremely popular in the tube-era of the 1950s and 60s and which products are still heard on the air today in amazing quantities.

With the company motto, "We will not let you fail," ringing in their ears, many thousands of hams all over the world built Heathkit products that were always well designed with thorough construction documentation. The company kept pace with the technology of home electronics right into the era of the personal computer and included stereos, TV sets and even electronic organs among kits on offer.

Rich covers the rise and eventual fall of the company that set the standard for amateur radio products for at least one entire generation of hams.

### On Our Cover

Heathkit's five generations of four-band, entry level, superhet sets plus one regenerative set as follows: Bottom left to right GR-91, GR-64, SW-717. Top left to right AR-3 and AR-2; extreme right on top is the GR-81, Heath's four-band regenerative set. (Photo courtesy: Rich Post KB8TAD)

## C O N T E N T S

## 2013 SWL Winterfest .....12

By Thomas Witherspoon K4SWL

Each year for the past 26 years the hardest of shortwave listeners meet during a weekend in March near Philadelphia for pure SWL indulgence: swapping stories of HF high jinks, music, technical forums and, of course, tuning in on all manner of shortwave radios. Longtime SWL blogger and *MT* contributor Thomas Witherspoon captures the essence of the weekend in this report.



Photo by Thomas Witherspoon K4SWL

## The Fleet is in: Angling for Radio Buoys .....13

By Mario Filippi N2HUN

Looking for a new HF DX challenge? Try your hand at monitoring the world's fleet of fishing buoys, the unattended sentinels of the briny deep, whose QRP-level signals pop up on HF anywhere from 1605 to 4000 kHz with their 3-5 watt CW signals. Regular contributor Mario Filippi joined a dedicated few who monitor these waterborne beacons and gives you the inside story on how it's done.

## The Day the KNX Tower Collapsed.....14

By Gordon Schlesinger W6LBV

It's not unusual for severe weather to bring down a broadcast tower and when it does it lands hard on a station's finances and listeners. But, what happened in 1965 to the tower of Los Angeles AM giant KNX was not the result of freak weather or accident. It was sabotage! Gordon Schlesinger W6LBV details the event that virtually silenced a major city voice for nearly six months while repairs were made and the event was investigated.



Photo by Gordon Schlesinger W6LBV

## R E V I E W S

## West Mountain Radio RIGblaster Advantage .....56

By Larry Van Horn N5FPW

*MT* Assistant Editor, Larry Van Horn has been racking up digital-mode contacts for more than 13 years. This month he looks at the RIGblaster Advantage digital-mode rig-to-computer interface from West Mountain Radio.

Larry says, "The Advantage is superbly constructed, has silky smooth transmit/receive/VOX controls on the front of the unit and a small footprint. It is easy to swap around with other rigs (i.e. such you might do during Field Day operations)". He also found that the RIGblaster Advantage took all the guesswork out of operating even the more arcane digital modes.



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